

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-54. Canceled

55. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method, comprising the steps of:

forming a lesion with an ablation element on a distal region of a single relatively short shaft; and

applying stimulation energy to tissue with a stimulation element on the distal region of the same single relatively short shaft after the step of forming a lesion with the ablation element.

56. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, further comprising the step of: placing the distal region of the single relatively short shaft directly against tissue.

57. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, further comprising the steps of

inserting a portion of the single relatively short shaft into a patient by way of an opening formed during one of a thoracotomy, median sternotomy, or thoracostomy; and

placing the distal region of the single relatively short shaft directly against tissue.

58. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the step of forming ~~a~~the lesion comprises forming a lesion by transmitting ablation energy to tissue with an electrode on ~~a~~the distal region of ~~a~~the single, relatively short shaft.

59. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the step of applying stimulation energy to tissue comprises applying stimulation energy to tissue on one side of the lesion with a stimulation element on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft, the method further comprising the step of: monitoring tissue on the other side of the lesion to determine whether the tissue stimulation produced a local activation on the other side of the lesion.

60. (Withdrawn) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the step of applying stimulation energy to tissue comprises applying stimulation energy to tissue within the lesion, the method further comprising the step of: monitoring tissue in spaced relation to the lesion to determine whether the tissue stimulation produced a local activation in spaced relation to the lesion.

61. (Withdrawn) A surgical method as claimed in claim 60, further comprising the step of: selecting a predetermined stimulation energy level that corresponds to tissue stimulation to a predetermined depth; wherein the step of applying stimulation energy to tissue comprises applying stimulation energy at the predetermined level to tissue within the lesion.

62. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the step of applying stimulation energy to tissue comprises applying stimulation energy to tissue with a stimulation element on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft after the step of forming ~~a~~the lesion with ~~an~~the ablation element and without substantially moving the single relatively short shaft.

63. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the step of forming a forming ~~a~~the lesion comprises forming a lesion with a two spaced ablation elements on ~~a~~the distal region of ~~a~~the single relatively short shaft, and the step of stimulating tissue comprises stimulating tissue with a stimulation element between the ablation elements after the step of forming ~~a~~the lesion.

64. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method, comprising the steps of:
forming a lesion with an ablation element on a distal region of a single, relatively short shaft; and
monitoring local tissue activation with an element on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft after the step of forming ~~a~~the lesion with ~~a~~the ablation element.

65. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 64, wherein the step of forming ~~a~~the lesion comprises forming a lesion that defines a perimeter around a tissue region with ~~a~~the ablation element on ~~a~~the distal region of ~~a~~the single relatively short shaft.

66. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 65, wherein the step of monitoring local tissue activation comprises monitoring local tissue activation in within the tissue region with an element on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft.

67. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 64, further comprising the step of: placing the distal region of the single relatively short shaft directly against tissue.

68. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 64, further comprising the steps of: inserting a portion of the single relatively short shaft into a patient by way of an opening formed during one of a thoracotomy, median sternotomy, or thoracostomy; and placing the distal region of the single relatively short shaft directly against tissue.

69. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 64, wherein the step of forming ~~a~~the lesion comprises forming a lesion by transmitting ablation energy to tissue with an electrode on ~~a~~the distal region of ~~a~~the single relatively short shaft.

70. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method as claimed in claim 64, wherein the step of monitoring local tissue activation comprises wherein the step of monitoring local tissue activation with an electrode on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft.

71. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical method, comprising the steps of:
- forming a lesion within cardial tissue;
 - positioning a first stimulation element on a single probe shaft on epicardial tissue adjacent to the lesion;
 - positioning a second stimulation element on the same single probe shaft on endocardial tissue adjacent to the lesion;
 - applying stimulation energy from one of the first and second stimulation elements on the same single probe shaft; and
 - detecting whether the applied stimulation energy is transmitted through the lesion with the other of the first and second stimulation elements to determine whether the lesion is transmural.
72. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical probe, comprising:
- a single relatively short shaft defining a distal region and a proximal region;
 - an ablation element defining an ablation element configuration on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft; and
 - a stimulation element defining a stimulation element configuration on the distal region of the same single relatively short shaft, wherein the ablation element comprises a plurality of longitudinally spaced ablation elements and the stimulation element comprises a plurality of located between respective pairs of adjacent ablation elements, the stimulation element configuration being different than the ablation element configuration.

73. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A surgical system, comprising:

a source of ablation energy;

a source of stimulation energy; and

a surgical probe, adapted to be operably connected to the source of ablation energy and the source of stimulation energy, the surgical probe including a single relatively short shaft defining a distal region and a proximal region, an ablation element defining an ablation element configuration on the distal region of the single relatively short shaft, and a stimulation element defining a stimulation element configuration on the distal region of the same single relatively short shaft, wherein the ablation element comprises a plurality of longitudinally spaced ablation elements and the stimulation element comprises a plurality of located between respective pairs of adjacent ablation elements, the stimulation element configuration being different than the ablation element configuration

74. (Currently Amended) A surgical system, comprising:

a source of ablation energy;

a source of stimulation energy; and

a surgical probe, adapted to be operably connected to the source of ablation energy and the source of stimulation energy, the surgical probe including

a single relatively short shaft defining a distal region and a proximal region,

an ablation element defining an ablation element configuration on the distal region of the same single relatively short shaft, and

a stimulation element defining a stimulation element configuration on the distal region of the same single relatively short shaft,

wherein the ablation element comprises a pair of longitudinally spaced ablation elements and the stimulation element is located between the ablation elements, the stimulation element configuration being different than the ablation element configuration.

75. (New) The surgical system of claim 74, wherein the ablation element and the stimulation element are fixed at respective locations on the same single relatively short shaft such that the location of the ablation element does not change relative to the location of the stimulation element on the same single relatively short shaft.